

For each clinical topic, the text covers what questions to ask, what orders to give over the phone, how to estimate the urgency of the situation, "elevator thoughts," the main threats to life, the necessary history, physical and laboratory data, and management. Carefully chosen tables and figures illustrate key points.

The book provides a practical method of teaching common problems in clinical teaching units. It is a must for medical students and interns in internal medicine.

C. Laird Birmingham, MD, FRCPC
Head
Division of General Internal Medicine
University of British Columbia
Vancouver, BC

Fills an important void

Understanding Menopause. Janine O'Leary Cobb. 296 pp. Illust. Key Porter Books, Toronto. 1993. \$18.95. ISBN 1-55013-487-6

This is a definitive guide for women approaching or experiencing menopause. In clear, easy-to-read language it gives women a positive understanding of this dramatic time of change.

This book is different from many others in that it draws on the testimony of Janine O'Leary Cobb and thousands of women about their experiences with menopause, its treatment and the physicians who have offered treatment. O'Leary Cobb is nationally and internationally respected by both the medical and academic communities. Her newsletter *A Friend Indeed* has established her as an expert and authority in this field.

The book offers practical, accurate information on the signs and symptoms of menopause, from a physical, medical, psychologic, social and treatment perspective. It provides women with the basis for an informed and nonjudgemental evaluation of the multiple treatment regimes, both pharmacologic and

nonpharmacologic. An updated, credible bibliography is included. As well, lifestyle changes, dietary guidelines, principles of good health, physical fitness, aging and sexuality are discussed in nonthreatening and practical terms.

The section on cancer, osteoporosis, and coronary heart disease and their prevention is practical and well supported by the literature and current research, which further helps women make rational and informed choices. The up-to-date, extensive resource section lists support groups, films and publications.

I confidently recommend this book to patients as a definitive and comprehensive text on understanding menopause. Indeed, physicians could learn a great deal from it about managing the condition and counselling patients. This book fills an important void in patient and physician education on menopause.

B. Norman Barwin, MD, FRCOG, FSOGC
Gynecologist
Ottawa, Ont.

Incomplete and fragmented

Advanced Paediatric Life Support: the Practical Approach. Advanced Life Support Group. 277 pp. Illust. BMJ Publishing Group, London. 1993. £23. ISBN 0-7279-0792-1

Written for doctors, nurses and paramedics this book is the core text for the advanced pediatric life support (APLS) course in Britain. Because it is designed for use in that country the statistics, medicolegal advice and some drug names are not applicable in Canada. This book should not be confused with more complete and accurate North American texts with similar titles.^{1,2}

The book is divided into six parts: introduction, life support, the seriously ill child and the seriously

injured child, practical procedures and appendices on acid-base balance, fluids and electrolytes, child abuse, and childhood accidents and their prevention. This division fragments important subjects; for instance, the description and treatment of respiratory emergencies is spread over the book. Similarly, the discussion of managing cardiac arrest is separate from the chapter on cardiac emergencies.

As with many multiauthored textbooks the book lacks uniformity among chapters. The chapter on cardiac emergencies gives some excellent guidelines for treating arrhythmia (with a concise discussion of pathophysiologic features), cardiogenic shock, duct-dependent congenital heart disease, systemic hypertension and heart failure; however, the appendix on fluid and electrolyte management covers normal requirements too much and some important emergencies too little (e.g., there is no mention of the use of hypertonic saline for hyponatremia in a child with seizures). A very practical appendix, "If You Don't Succeed," has obviously been written by a sensitive author with practical experience dealing with the parents of a child who has suddenly died.

There are some important omissions: there is no mention of the rapid-sequence induction of anesthesia for emergency mechanical ventilation and no advice on the in-hospital use of corticosteroids in children with croup, as currently recommended by the Canadian Paediatric Society. This may be the reason for quoting rates of up to 5% for endotracheal mechanical ventilation in such children.

The extensive formulary is confusing because of its use of "total daily dose," even with drugs such as epinephrine for which repeated doses are not cumulative. The dose for intravenous salbutamol is much lower than I have found effective for severe asthmatic crisis. Sodium bicarbonate is suggested for asystole, contrary to the recent recommenda-